

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action mailed February 7, 2008, claims 1-7 were rejected. Additionally, claim 6 was objected to. Additionally, the drawings were objected to. Additionally, guidelines to the specification were suggested by the Examiner. In response, Applicants hereby request reconsideration of the application in view of the below-provided remarks. Claims 1 and 7 are amended. Claim 2 is canceled. No claims are added.

For reference, claims 1 and 7 are amended. In particular, claims 1 and 7 are amended to recite that the supply of the sampling clock signals is suppressed after an end of a preceding message until the condition is met. These amendments are supported, for example, by the subject matter described in the original specification on page 4, line 17, through page 5, line 5, and claim 2.

Objections to the Drawings

Applicants have reviewed and considered the objections to the drawings and respectfully traverse all objections. The Office action cites 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(n) and (o) in the objection and requires a legend in Figs. 1-6. The current application is a U.S. National Stage application. The labeling of figures with text matter is prohibited under PCT Rule 11.11, except when absolutely indispensable for understanding. Further, MPEP 1893.03(f) states that “[t]he USPTO may not impose requirements beyond those imposed by the Patent Cooperation Treaty (e.g., PCT Rule 11).” In the present application, Applicants submit that the addition of legends to the drawings is not “absolutely indispensable” because the individual drawing elements are identified and described in the specification. In view of the above rules, Applicants respectfully assert that additional text labeling is not required in the drawings of the current application.

Objections to the Specification

The Office Action also suggests that section headings be added to the specification, according to the guidelines set forth in the MPEP. Applicants note that the suggested section headings are not required and, hence, Applicants respectfully decline to amend the specification to include the indicated section headings.

Objections to the Claims

The Office Action objects to claim 6 for the following informality. In particular, claim 6 is objected to for using “means for” language in an apparatus claim. Applicants note there is no basis for this objection. 35 U.S.C. 112, paragraph 6, states in part that an element in a claim for a combination may be expressed as a means for performing a specified function. Hence, the language of 35 U.S.C. 112, paragraph 6, explicitly allows the use of “means for” language for an element of a claim. Moreover, the Office Action does not provide any statutory or regulatory basis for the current objection based on using “means for” language in combination with other limitations of an apparatus claim. Therefore, the asserted objection to claim 6 for using “means for” language appears to lack supportive reasoning or statutory or regulator basis. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the use of “means for” language in claim 6 is not objectionable and, hence, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to claim 6 be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1, 3, 5, and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sato et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,596,582, hereinafter Sato) in view of Pohlmeyer et al. (U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2002/0101884, hereinafter Pohlmeyer). Additionally, claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sato in view of Pohlmeyer. Additionally, claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sato in view of Pohlmeyer. Additionally, claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sato in view of Pohlmeyer. However, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are patentable over Sato and Pohlmeyer for the reasons provided below.

Independent Claim 1

Claim 1 recites that a clock source circuit searches for potential sync break intervals, verifies each potential sync break interval, and adapts the frequency of the sampling clock to the timing property of the sync field interval as a condition prior to supplying the sampling clock signal at the adapted frequency specified by the sync field interval identified by the potential sync break interval. Additionally, claim 1, as amended, recites that the “supply of sampling clock signals is suppressed after an end of a preceding message until said condition is met” (emphasis added).

While the details of the specification do not limit the scope of the claims, it may be useful to refer to the description provided in the specification for a contextual understanding of the suppression of the supply of sampling clock signals after an end of a preceding message until a condition is met, as recited in claim. As explained in the original specification, preferably no or substantially no internal signal transitions occur in instruction processor 100 during suspension so as to minimize power consumption. Specification, page 4, line 17, through page 5, line 5. Thus, suspending the supply of sampling clock signals following the end of a preceding message can lead to a relative reduction in power consumption compared to not suspending the supply of sampling clock signals following the end of a preceding message.

Applicants submit that the combination of Sato and Pohlmeyer does not teach suppressing the supply of sampling clock signals after an end of a preceding message until a condition for supplying of sampling clock signals is met, as recited in the claim. Additionally, Pohlmeyer also fails to teach suppressing the supply of sampling clock signals after an end of a preceding message until a condition for supplying of sampling clock signals is met. Although the Office Action contends that Pohlmeyer purportedly teaches the indicated limitation, this contention is respectfully traversed.

Pohlmeyer relates to searching for a sync break interval. Pohlmeyer, abstract. More specifically, Pohlmeyer merely teaches that a new search is initiated for a subsequent sync break interval following the end of a preceding message. Pohlmeyer, Fig. 4, block 438; page 8, paragraph 28 (“Flow then continues to block 436 where the received data counter is decremented. If the receive data counter has decremented down to zero, then the maximum allowable number of bytes has been transmitted and the

system is assumed to have run out of control. Therefore, flow returns to block 402 where a new break (or SOF symbol) search is initiated” (emphasis added)). Hence, Pohlmeyer does not teach that the supply of sampling clock signals is suppressed following the end of a preceding message. Instead, Pohlmeyer expressly teaches that a new search is initiated for a subsequent sync break interval. Moreover, Pohlmeyer notes that blocks 622 through 636 of Fig. 6 function in the same manner as blocks 424 through 438 of Fig. 4. Pohlmeyer pages 4-5, paragraph 32.

Hence, Pohlmeyer does not teach that a sampling clock signal is suppressed following the end of a message. In fact, Pohlmeyer appears to be silent in regard to suppressing the supply of sampling clock signals following the end of a preceding message. Additionally, the Office Action does not assert that Sato might teach the missing limitation of Pohlmeyer. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 1 is patentable over Sato and Pohlmeyer because Pohlmeyer does not teach “supply of sampling clock signals is suppressed after an end of a preceding message until said condition is met,” as recited in claim 1.

Therefore, the combination of Sato and Pohlmeyer fails to teach all of the limitations of the claim because Pohlmeyer does not teach supply of sampling clock signals is suppressed after an end of a preceding message until said condition is met. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable over the combination of Sato and Pohlmeyer because the cited references do not teach all of the limitations of the claim.

Independent Claim 7

Applicants respectfully assert independent claim 7 is patentable over the combination of Sato and Pohlmeyer at least for similar reasons to those stated above in regard to the rejection of independent claim 1. In particular, claim 7 recites that the “supply of sampling clock signals is suppressed after an end of a preceding message until said condition is met” (emphasis added).

Here, although the language of claim 7 differs from the language of claim 1, and the scope of claim 7 should be interpreted independently of claim 1, Applicants respectfully assert that the remarks provided above in regard to the rejection of claim 1

also apply to the rejection of claim 7. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert claim 7 is patentable over the combination of Sato and Pohlmeyer because the cited references do not teach all of the limitations of the claim.

Dependent Claims 3-6

Claims 3-6 depend from and incorporate all of the limitations of independent claim 1. Applicants respectfully assert claims 3-6 are allowable based on allowable base claims. Additionally, each of claims 3-6 may be allowable for further reasons, as described below.

In regard to claim 4, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 4 is patentable over the combination of Sato and Pohlmeyer because the combination of cited references does not teach all of the limitations of the claim. Claim 4 recites a clock source circuit configured “to verify whether one or more internal intervals between communication signal level changes in said sync field interval have durations corresponding to the bit period specified by the sync field interval as a further condition prior to supplying the sampling clock signal at the adapted frequency specified by the sync field interval” (emphasis added). In contrast, the cited portion of Pohlmeyer merely teaches counting the number of falling edges. Pohlmeyer, page 3, paragraph 25. In particular, Pohlmeyer teaches that if five falling edges are not detected, the sync character is invalid. However, counting the number of falling edges is not the same as measuring the duration of the five falling edges because a quantity of falling edges may be independent of the duration of the quantity of falling edges. In other words, a quantity of 20 falling edges may equal the same duration as 5 falling edges when the frequency of the 20 falling edges is approximately four times that of the 5 falling edges. Thus, Pohlmeyer does not teach verifying that the duration of one or more internal intervals correspond to a specified bit period. Additionally, the Office Action does not assert that Sato might teach the missing limitation of Pohlmeyer. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 4 is patentable over Sato and Pohlmeyer because Pohlmeyer does not teach “to verify whether one or more internal intervals between communication signal level changes in said sync field interval have durations corresponding to the bit period specified by the sync field

interval as a further condition prior to supplying the sampling clock signal at the adapted frequency specified by the sync field interval,” as recited in claim 4.

In regard to claim 6, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 6 is patentable over the combination of Sato and Pohlmeyer because the combination of cited references does not teach all of the limitations of the claim. Claim 6 recites “a comparison circuit for comparing each time a combination of the first and a second number of a respective one of the potential sync break intervals and the sync field interval identified therewith, the comparison circuit outputting an enabling signal to enable supplying the sampling clock signal at the adapted frequency when a ratio between the first and second number in a combination is in a predetermined range” (emphasis added). In contrast, the cited portion of Pohlmeyer merely teaches comparing a potential sync break interval to a predetermined minimum break (T_BreakMIN) threshold. Pohlmeyer, page 3, paragraph 24. In particular, Pohlmeyer teaches that the break interval is valid if the break interval is greater than 9.5 bit pulses. Pohlmeyer, page 3, paragraph 26 (“A break character is therefore valid if it is greater than 9.5 bit pulses, just as would be detected by a standard UART/SCI circuit.”). Determining whether the break character is greater than 9.5 bit pulses is different from comparing a combination of a potential sync break interval and a sync field interval because the sync field interval may be variable, whereas the comparison of Pohlmeyer is set at 9.5 bit pulses, and thus, is not variable. Thus, Pohlmeyer does not teach comparing a combination of a potential sync break interval and a sync field interval. Additionally, the Office Action does not assert that Sato might teach the missing limitation of Pohlmeyer.

Moreover, determining whether the break character is greater than 9.5 bit pulses is different from determining whether the ratio between the potential sync break interval and the sync field interval in a combination is in a predetermined range and outputting an enabling signal when the ratio is in the predetermined range because determining whether A is greater than B may indicate nothing regarding the ratio between A and B and whether that ratio between A and B lies within a predetermined range. In other words, the ratio of A=8 and B=4 may be within the predetermined range, whereas A=5 and B=4 may not be within the predetermined range. Even though, in each case, A is greater than B, determining whether A is greater than B may be independent from determining

whether the ratio between A and B is within the predetermined range. Thus, Pohlymeyer does not teach determining whether the ratio between the potential sync break interval and the sync field interval in a combination is in a predetermined range and outputting an enabling signal when the ratio is in the predetermined range. Additionally, the Office Action does not assert that Sato might teach the missing limitation of Pohlmeyer. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 6 is patentable over Sato and Pohlmeyer because Pohlmeyer does not teach “a comparison circuit for comparing each time a combination of the first and a second number of a respective one of the potential sync break intervals and the sync field interval identified therewith, the comparison circuit outputting an enabling signal to enable supplying the sampling clock signal at the adapted frequency when a ratio between the first and second number in a combination is in a predetermined range,” as recited in claim 6.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the claims in view of the amendments and remarks made herein. A notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

At any time during the pendency of this application, please charge any fees required or credit any over payment to Deposit Account **50-3444** pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.25. Additionally, please charge any fees to Deposit Account **50-3444** under 37 C.F.R. 1.16, 1.17, 1.19, 1.20 and 1.21.

Respectfully submitted,

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